

The PIP POST



Parents working with other parents toward the goal of reunifying or maintaining their families



Jennifer's Story

My name is Jennifer Olague, and before I came to work for Parents in Partnership, I had a troublesome life. I was raised by my mom and grandmother. I saw my grandmother as a mother and my mom like a sister. Both were alcoholics and some of my early memories as a child, were waking up and the house would smell like alcohol. At age eleven, I was sexually molested by an uncle. I tried to tell my mother, but she did nothing. Throughout my childhood, I struggled to get her attention. She stopped drinking and began to better herself, but I never got the attention I craved.

I was introduced to meth by an uncle. It helped me bury the feelings that hurt me. I had my first daughter at eighteen; I managed to stay clean during my pregnancies. When I had my third daughter, I was in a toxic relationship with the father. We both used drugs together and got married. The marriage was plagued with domestic violence. I would take the abuse as long as he didn't hit my daughters. We eventually split up, and I moved back in with my mother. It was at this time that I had my first drug overdose. It was when my family realized that I was a drug addict and needed help.

Continued on page 5

A PiP's Perspective on Child and Family Teaming

LA County developed the Shared Core Practice Model (CPM) for working with families jointly served by child welfare and mental health. CPM is needs-driven, in contrast to service-directed practice in the past (TDM). The foundation of the CPM is the formation of a Child and Family Team (CFT).

Continued on page 4

Contents

Special Interest Articles

Jennifer's Story	1
The Core Practice Model	1
PiP Retreat	2
PiP Ten Year Anniversary	2
A Parent Letter	2
South County Recognition	3
Van Nuys Office	3
Tribute to Pat McQueen	4
PIP Closet	4
Community Collaboration	5

The Core Practice Model



On Monday, November 2nd, PiPs from all around the County, held the Program's second retreat at the Crescenta Valley Community Regional Park. The retreat was planned to foster teamwork and boost morale by integrating new PiPs and re-energizing current PiPs. At the retreat, PiPs reconnected by playing softball, cheering for their favorite team, and dancing to the one and only, Foxy Fox DJ by Reco. The event was a complete success with over 45 attendees. PiPs enjoyed the Taquiza (taco stand) and each other's company. The PiPs danced and played softball the rest of the day. The teams from the North, South, and East regions were all winners at the retreat. Millie, a PiP from the Compton office, said that the highlights of the retreat were the PiPs coming together from different parts of the County, the fellowship, the great food, and especially seeing the growth the PiPs in the program have undergone.

Second Annual PiP Retreat 2015



"As one person I cannot change the world, but I can change the world of one person."

Coming Soon: Ten Year Anniversary!

Parents in Partnership will be celebrating the Program's 10 year-anniversary this coming fall. Santos, one of the first Parent Partners, reminisced on the anxiety and confusion parents felt in their attempts to navigate DCFS. She recalls the deep need to provide support to parents newly entering the DCFS system. What began as a handful of parents volunteering as Parent Partners has expanded to a paid County-wide Program; reaching parents in communities, jails, courts, DV shelters and DCFS lobbies. "We started something that was somebody's dream, vision and idea... its growth has been amazing... PiPs are the voice for families." The PiP program has seen so much growth over these ten years, and its grassroots efforts have grown to be a structured, sometimes complicated organization, that has maintained its original goal of helping families. More details of the celebration including date, location and invitations will follow.

A Parent's Letter

My name is Stephanie Moreno, and I am the mother of two children, my 14 year old daughter Diamond, and my handsome son, Rommell, 6 [years old]. On April 7th, 2015 my world was turned upside down when an emergency response social worker asked me to come to the DCFS [office] for a meeting. I came to the meeting, and my children were detained. At that moment I lost control since, I felt deceived and tricked into coming to the office. I was kicking doors, acting irate and didn't care who was in my way. I was determined to get my kids back. There was a parent partner in the lobby by the name of Dennis. He helped me calm down, and told me that if I kept acting the way, I would end up in jail, and make matters worse. I connected with the PiPs and they were always there to support and encourage me. I started participating in their monthly support groups and parent orientations. The more I attended their support group, the more the process helped. Even when I was just having a bad day, I would go up there and kick it at the DCFS office in the lobby because I knew the PiPs were there, and [PiPs] Dennis and Precilla always had a way with bringing light to my situation. On January 14, 2016, I completed a six-month drug and alcohol program at Tarzana Treatment Center and by January 27, 2016; I had been accepted into a transitional living program, where I could live with my children. On February 22, 2016, my children were placed back in my care. I am still living at the transitional living center and continue to work on my sobriety every day. God willing, I will continue to remain clean; my case will be closed on July 5, 2016. I thank Dennis and Precilla all the time, for their support and encouragement, and also for teaching me how to maintain my "cool" when things didn't go my way. To any parent with an open case, who is reading this, I strongly suggest getting in contact with Parents in Partnership. They are here for us and they have been through everything that we might be going through at the moment...

Sincerely,

Stephanie Moreno



Parent Partner Recognition in the South

The South Parent Partners have been making quite the impact in their communities, and are showing what true community collaboration looks like. Their dedication to providing service to their communities and increasing access to services have been recognized and rewarded by several community agencies. Here are but a couple of times that the South offices have been recognized for their commitment to empowering others.

On April 30, 2015, the South County office Parent Partners were recognized for their hard work and dedication to the families in Los Angeles County, and received a special commendation award from the Fossie Lewis Annual Award with Behavioral Health Services, for demonstrating civic pride and their numerous contributions for the benefit of the community.

On June 5, 2015, Parent Partner, Denise Valdivia, from the Belvedere office, received an award from SPA 7 Community Partnership Governance Board for Woman of the Year, for her service and dedication to the community. Ms. Valdivia received the award for upholding the vision of ensuring that “all families in SPA 7 to be informed and have access to high quality Family Strengthening services to help cultivate safe and healthy communities”. Her commitment to the Parents in Partnership Program and the parents she helped made a significant impact in this community. The Community Partnership Governance Board extended their gratitude to the entire SPA 7 Parents in Partnership program and commended all of the Parent Partners on their dedication to improving the lives of so many families.

Congratulations go out to the South Parent Partners for upholding the value of community collaboration.



Overcoming Obstacles at the Van Nuys DCFS Office

The Van Nuys building is the first of its kind in LA County. The building hosts DCFS, DPSS, Child Support, Probation and Mental Health Services, all which share the same lobby. The building is convenient for clients due to all the services provided. However, it was difficult for the PiPs to identify the DCFS clients due to confidentiality. The initial set up was ineffective as PiPs had a desk in the middle of the lobby and redirected up to 100 non-DCFS clients daily. Later, the PiPs sat by the DCFS receptionist and waited for clients to arrive. Parent Partner Steven Medellin came up with the idea to give PiPs a desk in the reception area. Now, when the clients arrive there is a greeter alerting DCFS and PiPs via a special computerized program that redirects the clients to their corresponding windows. According to Steven, they are seeing an average of seven parents per PiP, daily; a great improvement from two parents daily. Hooray Steven!

A Tribute to Pat McQueen

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the loss of an invaluable team member to the PiP Program. South County Point Person, SCSW Patricia "Pat" McQueen passed away on January 18, 2016. Pat was assigned as the Point Supervisor for the PiP program since November 2009. She played an influential role in expanding the PiP program to the jails, ensuring that parents who were incarcerated can receive services such as Parent Orientations and Parent Support groups. Pat was also the forerunner in bringing the Parents in Partnership program into the Juvenile Courts. Pat was known for constantly wanting to expand services and reach more parents. But not only was she known for her proactive work ethic, she was also known for positive attitude and the encouragement she provided to the PiPs. Pat supported the PiPs on not only a professional level, but also encouraged personal growth and helped them to reach their full potential. The South County PiPs remember Pat for being very committed to the PiP program and was seen as a team member. Her approach was "Let's walk this journey together, side by side". Pat was known for developing leaders. Many of the PiPs who worked closely with Pat moved on to become Lead and Countywide Leads within the PiP program. Pat's influence on the PiP program will remain. She is greatly missed by the PiP Program.



"It is amazing how much you can accomplish when it doesn't matter who gets the credit." ~ Unknown

PiP Closet

On January 28th, 2016 the South County PiPs held a grand opening for the PiP Closet. Their PiP Closet is located at the First Presbyterian Church of Downey. The PiP Closet provides families with a selection of items, including baby cribs, diapers, children's clothing, adult court attire, hygiene items, and more. Since its opening, there have been 14 families served. A special thanks to Jennifer Olague, Desiree Burlile and Julie Emery for their hard work in organizing and maintaining the PiP Closet, donations, and family referrals.

A PiP's Perspective on CFT

Continued from page 1

CFTs are awesome because they focus on child and family teaming, and getting to the source of the problems and what we can do to keep children with their parents. Family engagement allows the parents, social workers, supervisors, and the facilitator to get together and fully disclose all necessary information. It is here that we let the parents know the CFT is a meeting where they can bring anyone that can be supportive.

When the parents are in their CFT, they are in charge. When the CFT comes everyone is part of the meeting, [Dept. of Mental Health, Dependency Investigators, the Children's Social Worker, and other team members]. This is where PiPs encourage the parents to be honest and disclose any problems they may be facing so that we can offer them all the services they need. For example, knowing about drug abuse, domestic violence, and other problems the parents may be facing, will help PiPs target the problem and offer various mediums of help such as drug abuse treatments, domestic violence awareness, mental health support, and other services available.

Having a neutral facilitator run the CFT is helpful. If it seems the social work is taking over, the facilitator can stop the meeting reassure the parents that they are the ones running the meeting and that they decide what they share about themselves. I believe that the CFTs are going to play a big role in keeping families together. I also think the PiPs play a big part in the CFT because they prepare families and lead them to reliable resources and court approved programs. We need to continue to empower families by educating them about CFTs. If we continue to follow the CFT guidelines, we will be able to keep more families together. – Shalice Gosey, Parent Partner



Jennifer's Story Continued from page 1

I stayed clean for six months and held a job but still kept in contact with my drug dealer and I began to use meth again. My eldest daughter told the school counselor that I had begun to use drugs again. That is when DCFS first entered into my life.

The social worker told me that she needed me to get tested for drugs. I went to take the test knowing that I was not going to pass. The following day I was at home getting high with some friends when I received a call from the social worker informing me not to attempt to pick up my children from school because they were being detained by DCFS.

I was told I needed to stop using drugs and get into a program. I was able to stay clean for months, but soon got back into drugs. I knew that I had to get myself into a program and get my daughters back. I called different places trying to get into a program, and I was able to secure a spot in one place. When the withdrawals began, I decided to leave. I immediately went to a house where I knew that I could get high. That day I was arrested and was sent to jail for three months.

When I got out not much changed, I continued to use drugs. I was convinced to get myself into a program again. Somehow I stuck it through the program. It was in this program that I learned how to be a mother. While in the program, I was reunited with my daughters. It took some time, but my relationship with them grew strong. After completing the program, I began to volunteer and would attend monthly meetings. I eventually was interviewed, and I now work for the Parents in Partnership Program.

One day my eldest daughter sat me down and told me she needed to tell me something. I had to promise that I was not going to relapse. She said that while I was struggling with my drug use, and they were in the custody of my mom, she was raped by my stepfather and that he molested my two younger daughters. She attempted to tell my mother, but she was told not to tell anybody because he was the provider.

I was enraged at my mother. She did nothing when it happened to me, and she didn't do anything to protect her granddaughters. I called the cops, and my stepfather was arrested. My family immediately turned their backs on me and harassed me about what I had done. They told me, I was ungrateful for what they had done for me while I was trying to get clean. The harassment from my family would not stop so I had to move far, so I moved to Riverside. We are all alone since my family members want nothing to do with me or my daughters. Even my grandma turned her back on me. But that's ok, because my daughters are safe now.



Community Collaborations

The Parent Partners in the East offices are steadily expanding their presence in the community. The PIP program is now actively part of the Interagency Collaborative Council, which includes a number of community social service agencies, such as Prototypes Women and Children and Tri-City Mental Health. This collaborative has been brought together to improve access to quality services to individuals and families in the Pomona and surrounding areas.

During the monthly meeting, the collaborative discusses different barriers community members may be receiving in accessing services, community updates are given, and resources are shared amongst the members.

The collaborative is currently seeking to expand its community outreach, ideas such as developing a blog and creating flyers are some of the projects that the Parent Partners and other members are involved in. Parent Partners Lisa Martinez and Adriana Ortiz have also been speakers and presented the PIP program to the Council.

Thank you to the following agencies for your support and collaboration with
Parents in Partnership!



Participating DCFS Offices

- Belvedere Office ~ 5835 S. Eastern Ave. ~ Commerce, CA 90040 ~ Warmline 323-725-4418
- Chatsworth ~ 20151 Nordhoff St. Chatsworth, CA 91311m ~ Warmline 818-717-4014
- Compton Office (East) ~ 921 E. Compton Blvd. ~ Compton, CA 90221 ~ Warmline 310-668-6604
- Compton Office (West) ~ 11539 Hawthorne Blvd ~ Hawthorne, CA 90250 ~ Warmline 310-263-2184
- El Monte Office ~ 4024 Durfee Ave. ~ El Monte, CA 91732 ~ Warmline 626-455-4712
- Glendora Office ~ 725 S. Grand Ave. Glendora, CA 91740 ~ 626-691-1827
- Lancaster Office ~ 300 E. Avenue K6, Lancaster, CA 93535 ~ Warmline 661-471-1002
- Metro North Office ~ 1933 S. Broadway, Suite 6 ~ Los Angeles, CA 90007 ~ Warmline 213-763-1757
- Palmdale Office ~ 39959 Sierra Hwy ~ Palmdale, CA 93550 ~ Warmline 661-223-4232
- Pasadena Office ~ 532 E. Colorado Blvd. Pasadena, CA 91101 ~ 626-229-3473
- Pomona Office ~ 801 Corporate Center Drive ~ Pomona, CA 91768 ~ Warmline 909-802-1452
- Santa Clarita Office ~ 28490 Avenue Stanford ~ Santa Clarita, CA 91355 ~ Warmline 661-702-6280
- Santa Fe Springs Office ~ 10355 Slusher Dr., Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670 ~ 562-903-5085
- South County Office ~ 4060 Watson Plaza Drive ~ Lakewood, CA 90712 ~ Warmline 562-420-6328
- Torrance Office ~ 2325 Crenshaw Blvd. ~ Torrance, CA 90501 ~ 310-972-3133
- Van Nuys Office ~ 7555 Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, CA 91405 ~ Warmline 818-904-8375
- Vermont Office ~ 8300 S. Vermont Ave. ~ Los Angeles, CA 90044 ~ Warmline 323-965-7068
- West LA ~ 5757 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 200 ~ Los Angeles, CA 90036 ~ Warmline 323-900-2320